

MILITARY SPOUSE PREFERENCE PROGRAM

The Military Spouse Preference Program was implemented to increase employment opportunities for spouses of members of the Armed Forces. The intent is to lessen the career interruptions of spouses who relocate with their military sponsors. Military spouse preference provides priority in the employment selection process for military spouses who are relocating to accompany their military sponsor on a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move to an active duty assignment.

Military Spouse – The Military Spouse Preference Program:

- applies to spouses of active duty military members of the U.S. Armed Forces, including the U.S. Coast Guard and full-time National Guard, who desire priority consideration for positions at DoD activities in the U.S. and its territories and possessions;
- applies only within the commuting area of the permanent duty station of the sponsor;
- applies only if the spouse entered into the marriage with the military sponsor prior to the reporting date to the new duty assignment.

The Military Spouse Preference Program does not apply when the sponsor is separating or retiring.

When are military spouse preference eligibles subject to priority consideration?

Spouse preference applies when management wants to fill a position from a competitive list of applicants. A spouse preference eligible who is ranked among the “best qualified” on a competitive list must be selected for the position.

Preference applies to DoD appropriated fund positions at grades GS-15 and below (and equivalent wage grade positions) in the competitive or excepted service. Preference also applies to non-appropriated fund positions at grades UA-8 and below.

Spouse preference does not apply when management chooses to select from a list of noncompetitive candidates or from one of the alternative recruitment sources. The alternative recruitment sources include: appointment of a 30% disabled veteran; VRA appointment; transfer at the same or lower grade, reassignment or change to lower grade; placement to correct an EEO deficiency; placement of a handicapped individual; or placement of an employee returning from an overseas tour of duty.

How do military spouse preference eligibles exercise preference?

The DoD PPP manual in Chapter 14 states that referral through Program S is the only means by which eligible spouses will receive preference for competitive service positions in the commuting area of the sponsor's permanent duty station.

Spouses who are not eligible for consideration through PPP, are eligible for MSP when applying for DoD positions in the U.S. or in foreign areas through the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) or a DoD Delegated Examining Office (DEU) competitive examination. MSP applies only to the specific announcement under which the spouse is applying and only if that list is used to fill the position.

To request MSP, all spouses must submit the following documents:

- Application or resume;
- Statement requesting MSP; and
- Copy of military sponsor's PCS orders.

NOTE: THIS WILL CHANGE ONCE RESUMIX FOR DEU IS IMPLEMENTED. A COPY OF MILITARY SPONSOR'S PCS ORDERS WILL ONLY BE REQUIRED AT THE TIME OF SELECTION.

Spouse preference eligibility is terminated on placement into, or declination of, a continuing position at any grade level for which the eligible spouse has registered or applied for employment, whichever occurs first. Preference is also terminated on placement into any continuing position in the new duty station, i.e., one expected to continue for at least 1 year in either the appropriated or NAF workforces, whether or not preference was applied. Spouse preference may be exercised no more than one time per permanent relocation of the military sponsor.

FAMILY MEMBERS WITH E.O. 12721 ELIGIBILITY

Executive order 12721 enables certain eligible family members (EFMs) to be appointed non-competitively to the Civil Service once they return to the U.S. Those individuals may be appointed to any Federal occupation and grade level for which qualified.

FAMILY MEMBER

An unmarried child under age 23 or a spouse. An individual must have been a family member at the time he or she met the overseas service requirement and other conditions, but does not need to be a family member at the time of non-competitive appointment in the United States.

Who is eligible?

To be eligible, an individual must have worked as an Appropriated Fund Federal employee overseas while a family member of an Uniformed Service Member, civilian employee, or Non-Appropriated Fund (NAF) employee serving overseas. In the overseas assignment, the EFM must have completed 52 weeks of creditable service; received a fully successful or better (or equivalent) performance rating; and must have returned to the U.S. from the overseas tour of duty and met time requirements.

What is the time limit for using eligibility?

An individual is eligible for temporary, term or career-conditional appointment(s) under E.O. 12721 for a period of 3 years following the date of return from overseas to the United States to resume residence.